



Understanding Past Due Child Support

Noncustodial Parents

Once a court orders child support, it is your responsibility to pay that obligation on time and in full. If you fail to pay the court ordered child support obligation, the unpaid amount will still be owed. The unpaid amount is called “arrears” or “past due”.

What happens if I don’t pay child support?

When court ordered child support is not paid, many actions can be taken. Some actions such as tax refund intercepts, license revocation, passport denial, and child support liens are done automatically. The requirements for each action is different, including the amount of past due support that is owed. Agreeing to and following a payment plan may prevent some, but not all, enforcement actions.

If you are laid off from work, get called to active duty, or have had a change in circumstances, please call your local child support office. They may be able to help.

How can I make a child support payment?

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) Child Support Program offers the following methods to make support payments:

- Automatic deduction from your paycheck
- Online by automatic withdrawal, phone, mobile website or credit card
- Mail
- MoneyGram locations

For additional information, visit the TDHS Paying Child Support website: <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/humanservices/for-families/child-support-services/child-support-payment-information/paying-child-support.html>.

The child support order just began. How can I already have a past due balance?

When a child support order is initially entered, it will state how much your child support payment will be each month. It can also include retroactive support for months prior to the court order date.

For example:

Retroactive child support payments may apply if one parent is ordered to pay support dating back to when their child was born, when the parties separated, or a different date to be determined by the court.

Will I be charged interest on past due child support?

Interest is not automatically charged on past due child support. Prior to July 2018, interest on past due child support could be added at a rate up to twelve (12%), depending on the date of the order. As of July 2018 for IV-D child support cases, interest may be added at a rate up to six percent (6%) at the court’s discretion onto past due child support. Interest may be added to past due child support on a case-by-case situation.

My child is over eighteen (18) years old. Why am I still paying child support?

In Tennessee, current child support ends when:

1. The child turns eighteen (18) years old, OR
2. The child graduates from high school or the class which the child is a member when the child turns eighteen (18) graduates, **whichever occurs last**.

Once current support ends, you are still required to pay any past due support owed. Child support will be collected until the past due support amount reaches a zero (0) balance.

I recently filed bankruptcy. Do I still owe past due child support?

Yes. Child support cannot be discharged by filing bankruptcy.

My driver license was revoked for past due child support. How can I get it back?

A noncustodial parent's driver license may be revoked if the past due child support is greater than five hundred dollars (\$500) and no payment has been made in the last ninety (90) days. In order to have your license reinstated, you must contact your local child support office to make payment arrangements. If you do not qualify for driver license reinstatement, you may qualify for a restricted driver license.



My passport application was denied for past due child support. How can I get my passport?

Passports will be denied or revoked if a noncustodial parent owes twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) or more in child support. In order to obtain or reinstate a passport, the noncustodial parent must:

1. Pay the entire arrears balance in full; **OR**
2. Contact the TDHS IV-D Child Support Program Passport Treasury Offset Coordinator at (615) 313-4880 to discuss payment arrangements.

I have lost my job and I am having difficulty finding employment. I am falling behind in my child support payments. What should I do?

It is important that you contact your local child support office and advise them of your situation. You are still under court order to pay child support, but the local office will be aware of your job loss and can provide you with employment/training resources that may be helpful to you.

Do you have to pay child support even though you do not have visitation with your child?

Yes. Child support is a separate issue from visitation. Child support is financial support for your minor children. The Child Support Program cannot help with civil matters such as divorce petitions, custody, or parenting time/visitation, nor can they provide legal advice on these issues. Contact the court mediator in your judicial district to discuss how these matters can be addressed by the court.

TDHS's goal is to encourage cooperation and compliance with court orders so that children have the financial support they need to grow and thrive.

I do not believe that my child support order is fair. What can I do?

If you believe that your child support payment is not fair or is incorrect, you are welcome to request a review of your case from your local Child Support Office.



Contact Information:

Web: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-support-services.html>

Phone: Contact information for each Child Support Office can be found at: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-support-services/child-support-office-locator.html>

TDHS Child Support Information Line: (615) 313-4880

Our Mission:

To build strong families by connecting Tennesseans to employment, education, and support services.